

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 7, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our concern with the deplorable conditions found at Walter Reed's outpatient facility. We are encouraged by the quick response to the conditions after Defense Secretary Robert Gates returned from visiting the facility.

We all agree our recovering veterans deserve hospitals that are clean, secure and sanitary. The new bipartisan commission to determine whether similar problems exist at the 154 other U.S. military and Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals is crucial to show respect for the valor and courage our nation's veterans demonstrated. The findings at Walter Reed are a grave breach of trust we hold with those who shed blood on the battlefield fighting for our freedoms.

Your decision to implement a comprehensive evaluation of conditions at Walter Reed, hold those in charge accountable, and create a bipartisan commission to investigate whether these unacceptable conditions are present in other military and VA medical centers, is most welcome. The resignation and firing of top Army officials indicates the seriousness of this matter and that a lack of attention was being paid to the conditions of our military medical facilities.

Clearly better oversight is necessary to ensure military facilities exemplify our soldiers' honor and courage. We look forward to the bipartisan commission's full report and the actions your administration will take.

We are grateful for the thousands of compassionate and skillful doctors and health professionals caring for these soldiers during their healing process. These brave young men and women recovering from their wounds are not the type to complain, so it is our responsibility to ensure that they receive first-class medical treatment.

We also strongly support the need for fundamental reform of the VA's medical care system. Despite the outstanding efforts of many dedicated healthcare providers, too many VA hospitals and the system of care within which they exist are case studies in bureaucratic inefficiency. Many of those treated for war-related injuries have, with their families, endured a great deal of paperwork and red-tape delays. This, too, is unacceptable, and going forward we must ensure world-class standards and patient-centered efficiency for our veterans.

We respectfully request a briefing from VA Secretary Jim Nicholson on the plans to upgrade the VA hospital system and outpatient clinics. A thorough examination of this issue is critical to ensure our government meets our moral obligation to those who have answered the call of duty.

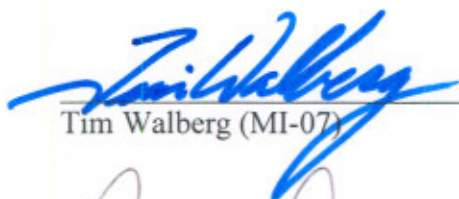


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Our veterans have earned the right to have options that best fit their needs. We should closely examine them and implement those that make the most sense.

Thank you for your swift action investigating this important matter. We look forward to your response and continued leadership in dealing with this issue.

Sincerely,



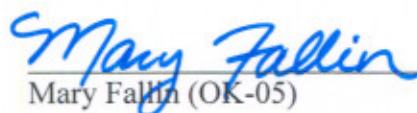
Tim Walberg (MI-07)



David Davis (TN-01)



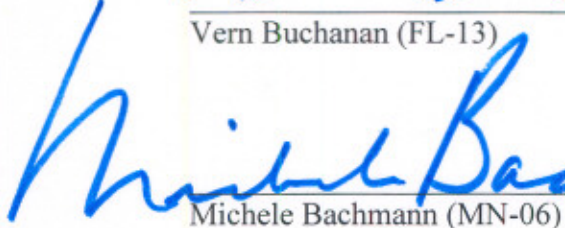
Doug Lamborn (CO-05)



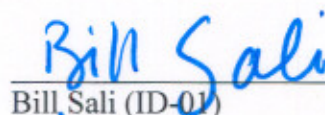
Mary Fallin (OK-05)



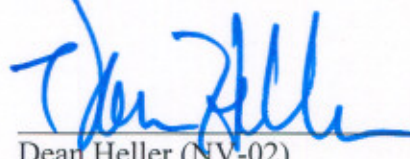
Vern Buchanan (FL-13)



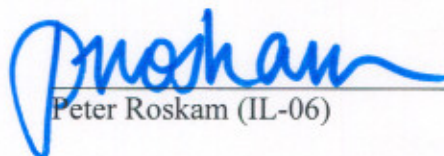
Michele Bachmann (MN-06)



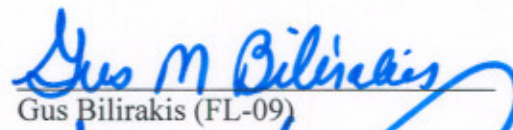
Bill Sali (ID-01)



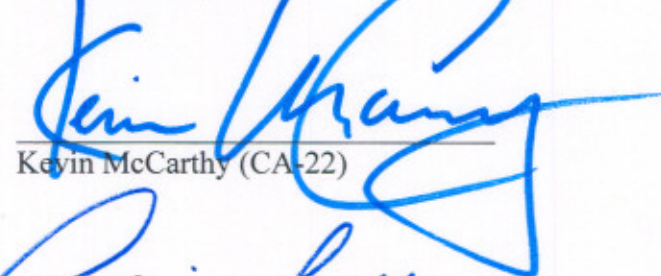
Dean Heller (NV-02)



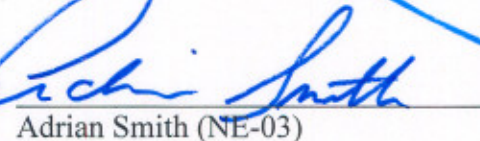
Peter Roskam (IL-06)



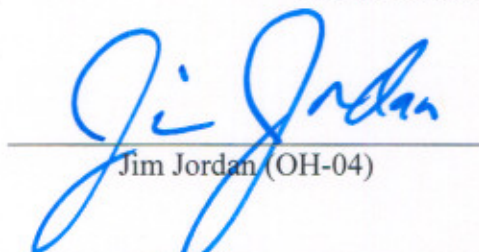
Gus Bilirakis (FL-09)



Kevin McCarthy (CA-22)



Adrian Smith (NE-03)



Jim Jordan (OH-04)

cc: Jim Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs